

(24)

A Vindication of the CASE of *Spittle-Fields*, against an *Uncharitable Paper*, privately Printed, called a *True Narrative of the Case of Sir George Wheler, &c.* Humbly offer'd to the Honourable House of Commons.

THE Inhabitants of the Hamlet of *Spittle-fields*, Petitioned the Honourable House of Commons for some Assistance towards Building a Church or Chappel of Ease for the use of the said Populous Hamlet, against which Sir G. Wheler oppos'd another Petition subscrib'd by a few Persons, of whom 14 only belonged to us. On which Account the said Inhabitants presented a second Petition, subscribed by many Hundred Hands, with a *True State of their Case*, to which an Unchristian Answer is privately printed, the *Essential Mistakes* of which that we may lay open, tho' we pass over the *unbecoming Language*, We the said Inhabitants, to this Honourable House, do again most humbly represent,

I. That we are asham'd to see some of our Neighbours Names to so palpable a *Falshood*, as That Sir G. Wheler's *Tabernacle is as useful and Convenient for us and two other Hamlets, as the building any new Church or Chappel can be.* Since Sir George's *Tabernacle*, with the Ground about it, and *Burying-Ground*, said to be set out by the Bishop of London's *Approbation*, tho' he neither has seen it, nor is the Ground set out, would contain but 6000 square Feet, which can receive but 500 *Corpses*, a less number then that generally buried from our Hamlet in one Year, as may appear by the *Annual Bills of Mortality*.

II. We are willing to believe Sir G. Wheler, as a Gentleman to have too much Honour, as a Christian and a Priest to have too much Truth to have penn'd a Writing so contrary to both, as the pretended *True Narrative* is, since he speaks of Sir George as *Lord Paramount of Spittle-fields*, whereas by a careful Examination according to the *Tax-Books* for 4 s. in the Pound, the Rents of the whole Hamlet appear to be about 14400 l. per Ann. paying to his

Majesty therefore 2800 l. and more on that Tax, of which the Rents of Mr. *George Bobun* a worthy Member of this House pay 373 l. and those of Sir G. *Wheler* only 330 l. both together a small Proportion to the whole Fields.

III. We know not what Sir *George's Intentions* are, his *Actions* we know, and the *unhappy Effects* of them we feel: What Bargains he makes with his Tenants it's not our Business to enquire. We know not how any *Donor* or *Donation* can be without *Donees*. He has given us nothing, and has solemnly declar'd *He never will*: and for his *Charity to Himself and his Heirs*, We owe him Nothing as we know of.

IV. For Sir *George's Religion*, we question it not, for we know nothing of it. We would have recover'd the Tabernacle, not for its Bigness, but because we seated it and maintain'd the Curate at our own Charge; we spent nothing in Law against him, his Adversary liv'd on *Tower-Hill*, in whose Management, if there were any Error, Sir *George's Charity* made some of us pay too dear for it.

V. This Writer says, *He never knew the Tabernacle so full, but it would have held more*. Yet many have fainted in it for the Croud, the Pales at the West-End and the space between have been cover'd with People, great Numbers have stood before the South Windows standing open for Air, and behav'd themselves reverently there, tho' they could not get in; this we have often seen in tolerable Weather, and are ready to assert upon Oath. We own we have many French and Walloons, and many of them joyn in Divine Worship with us, and more would if they had Room; but there's not a Dissenters Meeting in the Hamlet, except one of Quakers, very few of which live in our Neighbourhood.

VI. We know of no Canon allows Sir *George* to officiate in another Man's Pulpit when he pleases, or by which a General Licence to exercise the Office of a Priest, should enable him to thrust any Priest out of that place he's Legally invested in, nor do we know of any Assurances or Insolencies offer'd by any but himself.

VII. If the Author of the True Narrative denies Sir *George's* seating himself in a Chair before the Pulpit-Stairs, we pity him. If he means he did not Sit all the while, but sometimes Stood, and sometimes Kneeled, we admire his Wit, and his ingenious dealing with this Honourable House.

VIII. We are sorry to see our Right Reverend Diocesan abused, who gave his particular Orders with respect to our present Place, not only to Mr. *Milbourne*, but to Mr. G. *Bobun* a worthy Member of

of this House, and signified to him his *Approbation* of our *Petition*, with that particular *Proposal* That the said *Mr. Bohun* would at a proper time move for an *Addition* to the *Design'd Act* for *St. Pauls*, which *Orders* and *Approbation* yet this *Author* says were surreptitiously gotten.

IX. That his Lordship thought our *Petition* to have been *Sir George's*, proves only, That his Lordship thought *Sir George* ought to have *Petition'd* with, not uncharitably to have appear'd against us.

X. The Gentleman confesses *Sir George* did appoint *New Orders*, but readily dismiss them on a *Modest Application*, That his *Congregation* (which we much doubt of) will attest That he exactly follows the *Rules* and *Rubricks* of the *Church* of *England*, and never enjoin'd any *Orders* disagreeable to them. But its plain, That if he dismiss his *New Orders* on any application whatsoever, and yet never gave any disagreeable to the *Church* of *England*, he now cannot exactly follow the *Rules* and *Rubricks* of that *Church*.

XI. We are not much vers'd in *Rubricks* or *Canons*. But we are sure there are none for *Praying* before *Sermon* with the *Face* to the *People* till the concluding *Lord's Prayer*, and turning the *Back*, and repeating that towards the *Altar*. No *Rubrick* enjoins us to begin *Divine Service* with *Singing Psalms*, or to *Use* four in one *Morning Service*. No *Rubrick* ever order'd the *Wicker Basket* or *Glass Vessels*, or the *Time* of the *Clarks* bringing them at the *Communion*, or to read the *Exhortation* when the *People* are negligent, from the *Pulpit* after *Sermon*, when solemn notice of the *Communion* had been given from the *Desk*, at the proper *Time* before. No *Rubrick* ever order'd the *Priest* to leave out the *Gloria Deo in Excelsis* after the *Communion*. Nor to *Sing a Psalm* after *Morning Sermon*, while the *Priest* leaves the *Pulpit* to put on the *Surplice* again, to read the *Prayer* for the *Church Militant* at the *Communion Table*. No *Rubrick* allows to give the *Eucharist* to a *Person* unbaptized, and to defend the *Action* afterward in a *Sermon*, Nor to abuse the *Hearers* from the *Pulpit*, because they could not understand *Nonsense* in the *Chamber*. Nor to call it an *Insolent Affront* to be soberly desir'd, by a *Priest* of more than twice a *Man's* own *Standing*, to *Review* and *consider* again an *Ill Worded Discourse* (to call it no worse) concerning the greatest *Mystery* of our *Faith*. No *Rubrick* teaches us to forget the *Athanasian Creed* day after day, tho' admonish'd of it, when requir'd. Nor to *Collect Money* for the *Poor* at the *Tabernacle-Door*, and refuse the *Church-Warden* an *Account* of the *Disposal* of it; And, because there are no *Rules* nor *Rubricks* for these things, We remember not that *Mr. Milbourne* our *Conformable*

Curate ever did them, and if he should, we should approve them as little in *Him* as in any *Other Person* whatsoever.

XII. Whatsoever Sir *George*'s present *Assistant* may be, whom at present we spare, we know Sir *George* struggled hard for a *Person* of a very different *Character*, and had forc'd him on them, had not the most sensible of his *Friends* threatned in that Case to desert him quite; That he permitted him to be chosen but for *One Year*. That he could not persuade him to live in the *House* pretend'dly design'd for the *Minister*, tho' he might have had it Rent-free, and by the disturbance he gives him, abates his *Income*, and drives away his *Auditory*; so that he makes not above half what Mr. *Milbourne* did of the place, which *Moiety* Sir *George* would have reduced Mr. *Milbourne* to, as a clear proof of that great *Compassion* he had for his *Family*.

XIII. That the *Inhabitants* offer'd Sir *George* to pay him for the *Carcase* of the *Tabernacle* what it cost him, and to give him a reasonable *Ground-Rent* for it, provided he'd let them live in *Peace* under the *Care* of their lawful *Curate*, which he refus'd: they demanded then their *Money* for what they had laid out, and they'd leave *Him* in *Peace*, which he promis'd from Time to Time by *Word* and by *Letter*, without any talk of a *Lawyers* Judgment, which yet he refuses now, and sells those *Seats* for *Money* again, which we built, and have nothing for, which carries the Face of *extream Injustice*.

XIV. We find several *Subscribers* of Sir *George*'s *Petition* were impos'd on, and knew nothing of its true *Contents*, and are sorry for what they have done; several of the best who use his *Tabernacle* refus'd him, and several subscrib'd with us; and perhaps if the peaceable temper of some of those who subscrib'd it were enquired into, or their *Respect* to the present *Government*, it would not tend much to the advantage of their *Cause*.

XV. Our *Case* in Effect is acknowledged to be true by this very *Answer*, and we are ready to prove every particular by the Oaths of *Substantial* and numerous *Witnesses*, if called to it by this Honourable *House*, and we hope that tho' Mr. *Milbourne* should be prov'd an *Ill Man*, that would be no reason why there should not be a *Church* and a *Burying-Ground* granted to the *Hamlet* of *Spittle-Fields*.

Mr. *Milbourne*'s Answer to what concerns him in this Narrative is this.

I. The Narrative owns Mr. *Milbourne*'s *Choice* and Sir *George*'s *Congratulation*, and he'd be glad to see that *Speech*, read on that occasion, in publick and entire, and his own *Letters* to Sir *George* joyn'd with it.

II. When

II. When the Bishop of *London* gave him a Licence, he follow'd his own great Prudence without injury to any, and he thinks no Priest in his Diocese ought to prescribe to his Lordship. He knows of no *Affronts* offer'd, nor any Duty owing to Sir *George Wheeler* more then to any other *Subscribing Inhabitant*: His Licence is, *Ad peragendum Officium Curati in Tabernaculo infra præcinctum de Spittle-Fields erecto, in Precibus Communibus alijsq; Ministeriis ad Officium Curati pertinentibus*. His Lordship filling it up with his own Hand, which Mr. *Milbourne* humbly conceives gives Him and Him only a Title to *Officiate in Religious Matters* in that Tabernacle *Salvo Jure Episcopi & Vicarij*, and that therefore He's kept from performing his Duty there, to his great Loss, and against the known Laws of the Land, for Remedy of which Wrong he humbly lays his Own Case before this Honourable House.

III. Sir *George* never mention'd Mr. *Milbourne's* being his Assistant for near one whole Year, and when he mention'd it, Mr. *M.* positively refus'd it, standing on his Licence as *Sole Curate* there according to Law, humbly conceiving That where a place is given to God's Service, and the use of any People, and a Curate legally Licens'd with consent of the Donor to Officiate there, it's not in the Power of any such Donor to thrust out the Incumbent Curate, and He thinks there's no president in England of such an Arbitrary Practice.

IV. Mr. *Milbourne* has been in Orders 26 Years, has liv'd in several Places unblemish'd in his Life, and unquestion'd in his Conformity, and has left those Lasting Monuments of his Love to Decency and Order in the Chancel of Great Yarmouth as will Vindicate his Conformity when Sir *George's* Tabernacle will be forgotten, and his own Head laid in the Dust; for which he appeals to the worthy Representatives of that Corporation, and the Right Reverend Bishop of the Diocese.

V. He has written more in defence of our Priesthood against those of Rome, of our Faith against Socinians, already printed, of our Church-Government and Liturgy, licens'd for the Press; then Sir *George* can pretend to. And with what Zeal he acted against Popery in the late Reign, to the Hazard of his Life and Family, many Members of this and the Lord's House can witness: Nay, Sir *George* himself owns his Conformity so far, that Mr. *Milbourne's* short Exposition of the Church-Catechism is us'd in his Tabernacle when the Boys are (as sometimes they are) Catechis'd, and Sir *G.* has quoted it himself in the Pulpit as a good Authority.

Lord Bishop of York,
Earl of Yarmouth,
Sir Jacob Ashley, Mr.
Gardiner and Mr. Blomfield, Mr. England and Mr. Fuller.

VI. Tho' Mr. *M.* stands posselt of a *Just Reputation*, He's willing to submit his whole Life, since in Orders, to the *severest Scrutiny*, and whatever he has *Preach'd* or *Written* to the *Judgment and Censure* of his Lawful Ecclesiastical Superiours.

VII. Mr. *Milbourne* is really an Enemy to all Church *Phanaticism* and *Super-Conformity*, as things of the most fatal Consequence to the Church: therefore meeting with a weak and *Unlearn'd*, and therefore *Unlicens'd* Book, by a Prebendary of *Durham*, call'd *An Account of the Churches of the Primitive Christians, with a seasonable Application*, full of *absurd and impracticable Proposals* for *Reforming our Service*, and *reducing Dissenters*, with this Declaration, *I must profess my Ignorance to all the World of any more effectual means then the laying before the World the Practice of the Apostolical and Primitiv Church, next the Scriptures concerning these things, to bring it to pass, i. e. the Reduction of Dissenters.* Mr. *Milbourn* observ'd the Writer to be of an *Assuming and Innovating Temper* wholly Ignorant of true Antiquity, but fairly acquainting the World, *That our Establish'd Church follows not the Primitive and Apostolical Rule*; He therefore refus'd to comply with Sir *George's Whimsies*, but kept to the standing Rule, and his Diocesans sense of it, as directed by that excellent Discourse concerning the *Service of the Church*, premitted to the Book of Common-Prayer. And in this Temper he prays God always to preserve him.

VIII. Mr. *Milbourne* leaves Mr. *Wright* the Reverend Vicar of *Stepny*, now far distant, and *St. Hellens Parish*, and *Dr. Hollingworth*, to answer for themselves in what they are aspers'd with, and refers himself to the following *Testimonials* from the Gentry and Clergy near *Yarmouth*, and the best Inhabitants of *Spittle-Fields*.

This is to Certifie whom it may concern, That Luke Milbourn, late Curate of Great Yarmouth in the County of Norfolk, (being very well known to us for the greatest part of His Residence there, which hath been about Fourteen Years) is a Person Orthodox and truly conformable to the Church of England, as by Law Established: And hath ever had the Reputation of excellent Learning, and exemplary Sobriety, and to have performed the Ministerial Office with general Satisfaction and Applause. In witness whereof we have herewith set our Hands this 17th. day of April Anno Christi 1692.

Richard Vesy.
William Vesy.

Abraham Castel.
Leonard Mapes.

John Castel. Chris. Reue.
Leonard Mapes, Junior.

Charles Reue *Rector de Oldton.*
Robert Barron *Rector de Bradwel.*
Jo. Willes *Rector of Burgh in Flegg.*
George Cowper *Vicar de Orm'sby.*
James Wace *Rector de Filby.*
Ben. Ingram *Rector de Thriogby.*
Jo. Burrill *Vicar de Gorleston.*

Tho. Skeate *Rector de Fritton.*
Sa. Fleete *Rector de Burgh-Castle.*
Andrew Call *Rector de Mautby.*
Cuthbert Norris *Rector of Clippesby.*
Jo. Wace *Rector de Stokesby.*
Richardus Reynolds *Presbyter.*

October

October the 12th. 1694.

T Hese are to certify whom it may concern, That Luke Milbourn, Clerk, so long as He has been among us, which is from Christmas last, has been very constant and industrious in Preaching God's Word, Reading Prayer's daily, Administring the Sacraments, and Catechising in strict Conformity to the Liturgy and Cannons of the Church of England, as by Law Establish'd, and has behaved himself Moderately, Peaceably, and Soberly to the Honour of God, and the Service of the Church, and our general Satisfaction. In witness whereof we have Subscribed to this Paper.

George Bohun,
Daniel Walker,
David Lecount,
Thomas Fairfax,
John Webb,
Samuel Pantin,
Alexander Garret,
Samuel Fulwood,
Robert Houlding,
Leonard Page,
Edward Norris,
Thomas Wilks,
John Burton,
Isaac Irland,
Samuel Jackeman,
Richard Ivory,
Silvester Grant,
Hugh Terral,
John Furnis,
Ralph Jubbs,

Samuel Hannot,
Thomas Beacon,
Thomas Hodgkins,
Matthew Holland,
John Presson,
Thomas Dobbins,
Francis Hall,
Adam Castall,
Robert Fletcher,
Francis Weston,
James Stone,
William Graman,
John Garret,
John Lekenx,
Samuel Travel,
Thomas Staluer,
Emanuel Demetrius,
Stephen Stranke,
John Lynn,

John Parker,
Christopher Howard,
John Taylor,
Robert Coombes,
Seth Richold,
Peter Le Quiem,
John Huddie,
John Ethericke,
William Lambe,
Richard Potter,
Charles Burghill,
James Debear,
John Butcher,
James Tilney,
Thomas Sandell.

The Case of Spittle-Fire
Vindicated.